

**MINUTES  
COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION MEETING  
MARCH 2, 2005 AT 4:00 P.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
123 WASHINGTON STREET  
COLUMBUS, INDIANA**

**Members Present:** Dave Fisher (President), Jack Heaton, Rob Kittle, Tom King, Joan Tupin-Crites, John DeLap, Dave Bonnell, John Hatter, Steve Ruble,

**Members Absent:** Pat Zeigler, Rick Colgazier and Tom Finke (County Plan Liaison).

**Staff Present:** Jeff Bergman, Heather Pope, Sondra Bohn, Marcus Hurley, Thom Weintraut, Laura Thayer and Alan Whitted (Deputy City Attorney).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Minutes of the February 2, 2005 meeting.

Motion: Ms. Tupin-Crites made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Bonnell seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION**

None

**NEW BUSINESS REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION**

**RZ-05-04: East Columbus Independent Fire Department-**A petition by Daugherty Design Plus on behalf of East Columbus Independent Fire Department to rezone a lot of .046 acres from SU-11 (Public Buildings and Uses) to 1-2 (Medium Industrial). The property is located at 770 S. Marr Road in the Bartholomew Industrial Park; Columbus, IN.

Ms. Thayer presented the staff report on this request.

Mr. Mark Daugherty with Daugherty Design Plus and Kevin Green, East Columbus Fire Department Chief represented the petitioner.

Mr. Daugherty stated that this is a small parcel of land. He stated that is close to the railroad line and has never been used for Industrial purposes.

Mr. Ruble asked if there were any current plans for this site and why I<sub>2</sub> zoning was requested. Mr. Daugherty stated that the parcel is for sale. Mr. Green stated that it had been suggested that the property be returned to the original zoning.

Mr. Fisher opened the meeting to the public.

There was no one to speak for or against this request.

Mr. Fisher closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. Bergman stated there are five criteria that need to be met when rezoning is considered. First, would be the Comprehensive Plan, second would be the current conditions and character of current structures and uses in each district, third would be the most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted, fourth would be conservation of property values through out the City of Columbus, and fifth would be responsible growth and development. He stated that it is staff's opinion that this application does address those criteria and would recommend that Plan Commission send a favorable recommendation to the City Council.

Motion: Ms. Tupin-Cirtes made a motion to forward the request to the City Council with a favorable recommendation. Mr. Bonnell seconded the motion and it carried with a vote of 9-0.

Tom King left the meeting at this time.

**SU-05-02: Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation** – A request by Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation to rezone approximately .06 of an acre from R-6 (Multi-family Residential District) to SU-2 (Special Use District – Schools) located on the southwest corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Chestnut Street, more specifically 839 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus, IN.

Mr. Fisher stated that Mr. Ruble, Mr. Bergman and he had a prior meeting with the applicant and they shared some of the information that will be presented to the members today. He said Ms. Tupin-Crites had a chance to review the notes of the meeting and those are on file in the Planning Department. Mr. Fisher noted that cases SU-05-02 and SU-MM-09-03 will be discussed together.

Mr. Hurley presented the staff report on this request.

**SU-MM-05-03: Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation/Central Middle School** – A request by Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation for a major modification to a special use site plan for a total of redesign of the Central Middle School site. The property is located at 725, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus, IN.

Ms. Pope presented the staff report on this request.

Mr. David Hayward with Christopher B. Burke, Steve Forster, Project Manager and Mark Eriksson with CSO Architect Group represented the petitioner.

Mr. Eriksson stated they were replacing an existing building that is 148,000 sq. feet with one containing 172,000 sq. feet to meet the new educational programs. The Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation would like to implement and have all middle schools up to the same levels of education. The existing buildings on the site did not warrant making additions. He stated they met with the School Corporation and members of the community on a number of occasions to try to obtain as much input as possible in the design of a new school. He said they then designed a building that fit the site. He said the new building would be where the current football field was located and that the current building is where the new football field and track will be. The logistics of the concept was to keep the students in the building as long as possible, build the new building on the site and when the building is complete move the students. The existing building will be demolished.

Mr. Eriksson showed a slide presentation of the new school to the Commission members and

the audience.

Mr. Hayward stated that Lincoln School would be unchanged.

Mr. Eriksson stated that the 6<sup>th</sup> Street corridor would be the primary area for drop off for students, staff and parent parking. The parking count will be increased by approximately twenty spaces in this area. There will be landscaping installed around the perimeter of the new track and football field. The main entry to the building is located in the front facing the drop-off area. Because it is on a corner lot there is no backside of the building, every side is a front door. There is no backing onto Chestnut from a loading area. The bus drop off location is located off 7<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a passing lane for the buses to use and there is space for fourteen buses. They will not be able to pull directly onto the street, as there will be a medium placed there to separate bus traffic from passenger vehicles. There is only one point of entry and one point of exit. Mr. Eriksson said they were doing everything possible to keep the existing trees along Seventh, Fifth, and Chestnut Streets. They have enough landscaping points to meet the ordinance.

Mr. Eriksson stated that the primary materials used for the exterior is a brick. At the top, there is a penthouse, which is painted silver that sets back into the building. He said there would be a canopy at the main entrance. Most of windows have sunscreen protection.

Mr. Eriksson stated that the existing sidewalks would be replaced at the existing locations. There is a service yard and any dumpster that would be located in that area will be screened from the public.

Mr. Kittle asked how large of an area was the green space shown on the presentation between the building and Fifth Street. Mr. Eriksson stated that the face of the building lines up with the face of Lincoln. Mr. Eriksson said that Lincoln students would also be allowed to use the large green space.

Mr. Fisher asked him to address the visual aspect of the site from the corner of Seventh and Chestnut. Mr. Eriksson stated the gymnasium and the performing arts building which would be limestone. In addition, screening would be located in this area. He said as the trees mature over the years they should become opaque and act as screening also. Ms. Tupin-Crites asked if this would be where the entrance and exit sites for the loading area would be located. Mr. Eriksson said yes.

Mr. DeLap asked what designs from the old building would be incorporated into the new one. Mr. DeLap stated that it is valuable to know that the old building does not just disappear and that pieces will be placed into the façade.

Mr. Eriksson stated that the two limestone tablets located at the entrance of Central would be placed at the end of the long canopy area and will be built into the wall. He said that the original corner stone of the 1859 would be included in the new building. Other limestone elements are being used from the old building in various areas. He stated that the two existing limestone lampposts would be used in the parent drop off area. There will be a bronze statue that was donated from the class of 1927 incorporated into the interior of the new building.

Mr. Fisher opened the meeting to the public.

Mr. Ray Gibson, 616 Lafayette Street spoke concerning the request. He stated that he would be directly impacted by this request. He expressed concern about the increase in traffic and parking. He expressed concern about the traffic pattern and the increase of vehicles that would be using the alley in this area. He stated that the area on 5<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut should be explored to allow more space for the parking and traffic.

Mr. Eriksson stated that currently the entry is off 7<sup>th</sup> Street for cars and buses. Because Pearl is one way south cars cannot use this street, the intent would be to have teacher parking or student drop off come down Lafayette. Then they would go south on Pearl or back north through the alley. There are two separate areas for the cars and buses.

Mr. Gibson asked if there were traffic counts. Mr. Eriksson said no.

Mr. Gibson asked if they planned to improve the alley that will be used. Mr. Eriksson stated the alley is approximately nine feet wide in most areas, but it is not in good shape. Mr. Eriksson said that it would be widened to twelve feet; the west side of the alley would remain intact with no alteration other than repaving. He stated the alley would be used for cars only, no buses would be allowed. He said the increase on the width would be on the east side where the existing gym and trees are located.

Mr. Eriksson stated that shortening the track had been discussed, but if that happened, it would not be a standard track. He said it was a six-lane track and cannot be used for middle school group competition. It can be used for practice and small dual meets.

Mr. Hayward stated in the beginning of the project several years ago they had the front door facing Chestnut Street. To make that plan work the traffic flow on Chestnut and California would have had to be reversed. He stated the fourteen buses would capture a large portion of the student population. He said they did not anticipate a great deal of traffic. He said at the present site there are approximately forty or fifty cars present at peak time to pick up students. Mr. Hayward stated that cars and buses would be separated.

Ms. Tupin-Crites asked if the majority is being served from the south and west, how does a bus come to the 7<sup>th</sup> Street drop off point? Mr. Hayward stated that the bus would come up Franklin Street and enter the site that way. Mr. Hayward stated that seemed the logical route. Mr. Eriksson stated that one of the good things about the current arrangement is when buses take off some will go to the east and then some will use Chestnut and California Streets. That should elevate some of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street corridor traffic.

Mr. Gibson asked why the green space at 5<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut was not used for parking. Mr. Eriksson stated that the green space was provided for students and generally for the whole neighborhood. He said St. Peters and Lincoln school would be using the space for a play area. He said the School Corporation's desire was to have as much green space as possible on a small-constricted urban site.

Mr. Fisher closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. DeLap asked if there were any plans for any freestanding signs. Mr. Eriksson said no.

Ms. Tupin-Crites asked how staff calculated the parking spaces needed at the site. Mr. Bergman stated the intent of SU is that the determination is left to the Plan Commission to see if there has been adequate parking provided.

Mr. DeLap asked if there were exterior lighting plans submitted with the site plan. Mr. Eriksson stated that the building lights are done through soffits. There are a number of those located in the overhang of the building and will be contained within the building. He stated that the original stone light fixtures were the only exception. There would be standard parking lot lighting and they would be on timers and photocells.

Mr. Fisher asked who would be responsible for the lighting of the alley at the west end of the school. Mr. Eriksson stated that it would be the City.

Mr. Fisher stated that he would like to hear from the Commission members regarding items that had been discussed in past meetings.

Ms. Tupin-Crites said on 7<sup>th</sup> Street next to the track is the bus drop off. She expressed concerns about the lack of fence that would provide safety at the football field and track area. Mr. Hayward stated that the distance from the outside edge of the football field is approximately fifty feet to the edge of the sidewalk.

Mr. Fisher stated that it was his opinion that there must be a lot of parent education when it comes to the traffic flow. He asked what policies had been put in place so that the bus drop off area and the student parent drop off system will work as described. Mr. Eriksson said the parent education would play a large role in achieving this goal. Mr. Fisher asked if any on street parking had been eliminated by this plan. Mr. Eriksson stated no.

Mr. Eriksson stated one of primary concerns of the lay out of this site was the safety of the students.

Mr. Fisher asked why it was important to maintain a large green space at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut. Mr. Eriksson stated the lead designer of the project did not want to detract from the current 5<sup>th</sup> Street architectural character. He said it was important that the school fit in with the surrounding buildings.

Mr. Kittle asked about the buses coming from the east how would they enter the bus stop. Mr. Hayward stated they would cross Hawcreek and either State Street or 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Hayward said that it was his opinion that most of them would be coming down State Street in which case they would stay on 3<sup>rd</sup> to Franklin and up to 7<sup>th</sup> Street. If they come in on 7<sup>th</sup> Street they could go down Central Avenue and make the same loop and tie into 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Mr. Kittle asked how the traffic congestion would be controlled at the alley exit onto 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Eriksson stated there would be a stop sign located there. Mr. Kittle stated that traffic would be backed up into the alley and actually to a point where it would interfere with the loop. He stated once you enter the loop, there could be situation that there would be no traffic moving at all. Mr. Eriksson stated he did not anticipate there being a long-term period with parents dropping off the students. He stated there were two ways out, north of the alley and south through Pearl.

Mr. Kittle asked how many parking spaces are being picked up in this area. Mr. Eriksson

stated that there are currently 78 parking spaces. At the new site, there would be 98 parking spaces.

Mr. Kittle stated that there would be problems with congestion going back onto 7<sup>th</sup> Street from the alley, also within the internal loop, possibility at both locations and most of all in the morning.

Mr. Forster said this site had been a challenge. He also stated that much hard work had gone into addressing the very issues that have been discussed at this meeting. Mr. Forster said they had gone as far as they could go with both the parking and circulation. He said they were open to suggestions from the Commission.

Mr. Fisher stated that the School Corporation should immediately begin a marketing plan for the traffic flow around the school. He suggested a massive education program for the parents, students and any one else that would be involved with the school.

Mr. Kittle stated that the entrance to the drop off zone for the bus appears to be very close to the alley. Mr. Hayward stated that the area would accommodate fourteen buses. He said assuming they will all be arriving in the morning close to the same time and they do not have feed to the front of the drop off point, there would be a possibility that they would be backed up on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the exit on the alley would be blocked.

Mr. Bonnell said it would very hard to dedicate to parents where to drop off the students no matter how much education was provided.

Mr. Fisher stated that they wanted the school to be a success. He said they did not want traffic to impair that success. He suggested that dialogue take place with Mr. Ruble and see if there was anything that could be done to improve the traffic and the circulation pattern.

Mr. Hatter stated that looking at the existing plan, having the parent drop off exit be a right only would eliminate some of the congestion in that area.

Mr. Ruble stated that it would be a difficult solution to enforce.

Mr. Kittle stated he was looking for assurance that the Commission's concerns would be addressed.

Mr. Hayward stated they would be working with staff to provide the details that are needed for the final closure of this request. Mr. Eriksson said there would be staff review and engineer review of the traffic control and signage.

Mr. Bergman stated that staff had taken this as far as possible. If there is something, the Plan Commission wants to see in terms of change that should be expressed at this meeting. Staff would verify that the changes have been made. If there were unanswered questions then the option would be to express them to the petitioners now. Mr. Bergman said this meeting could be tabled and continued to the next month if the Commission needs some additional information.

Mr. Hayward said there were several more steps to the process. The rezoning has to go to City Council. There is replatting to be done on a separate parcel on the northeast corner and

some utility easements to be sorted out. Mr. Hayward said the project would take another month or two to complete. Mr. Kittle suggested that the Plan Commission would like some assurance that some changes would be made on the plans. Mr. Fisher stated that a good faith effort is what the Commission is looking for.

Motion: Mr. DeLap made a motion to forward the rezoning request on to the City Council with a favorable recommendation. Mr. Bonnell seconded the motion and it carried with a vote of 8-0.

Mr. Bergman asked Mr. Eriksson how the size of this site compares with other designs that have been done by their firm. Mr. Eriksson stated that this space is not suitable for a suburban elementary school. The average size of a suburban elementary school is about 14 acres, the average size for a middle school is 20-22 acres and a high school is 32 acres minimum. Mr. Bergman asked what the size of the Central site was. Mr. Eriksson stated there were 10.5 acres at this location.

Mr. Bergman stated it would have been easier to choose a suburban site for this facility. He said that the consensus of the community was the school would remain at the site that brings with it a number of constraints. He said they would have to make use of alleys, city streets and for circulation on the site in a downtown area. Mr. Bergman said if approved the following conditions should be attached (1) provision of a drainage plan is acceptable to the City Engineer, (2) a lighting plan to be provided that shows the 90 degree cut off fixtures that have been discussed, (3) a the note added requiring the school to maintain the bus drop off located in the right of way.

Motion: Mr. Bonnell made a motion to approve this request subject to following conditions (1) A drainage plan to be submitted to the City Engineer's Office, (2) the lighting plan to include a 90 degree cut off fixtures, (3) and an agreement for the school to take over the maintenance of the City right-of-way. Mr. Hatter seconded the motion and it carried with a vote of 8-0.

Mr. Bergman asked for direction from the Plan Commission regarding the traffic and circulation pattern. Mr. DeLap stated he would like to see a report after the comments are considered in the forma of a brief discussion about the issues.

Mr. Forster stated that would try to respond to this and would be in touch with Mr. Bergman.

Mr. King returned to the meeting.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mr. Bergman stated that the Rules of Procedures regarding notification of surrounding property owners would need approval from the Plan Commission to be changed. He said at the present staff uses the GIS electronic mapping system to identify surrounding property owners. The list is taken to the Auditor's Office and manually verified to see if there is any change in ownership that has not been updated on the GIS maps. Staff is proposing to add a public notice sign that is placed on the property ten days before the meeting. That sign will provide additional notice to renters and persons that might drive by. This sign would compensate for any delay between during the transfer of property. This would delete the step of going to the County Building.

Motion: Mr. DeLap made a motion to approve the change of Rules of Procedure. Mr. Heaton seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Steve Ruble was nominated as 2005 the Liaison to County Plan Commission.

Mr. John DeLap was nominated to the 2005 Utility Review Committee.  
Mr. John Hatter was nominated as the 2005 Alternate to the Plat Committee.

Motion: Mr. Bonnell made a motion to approve the appointments. Mr. Kittle seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by voice vote.

## **REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Bergman reminded the Commission of the First Annual Joint City/County Plan Commission meeting, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 from 4-6 p.m. in the Meeting Room downstairs in City Hall.

### **LIAISON REPORTS**

Written reports were received and discussed.

**ADJOURNMENT: 6:30 P.M.**